

Brown

Florence. 20 January 1830.

Mem: I give you warning, this is the most unpleasant letter

My dear Dilke, I ever sent you! - to my feelings.

Many thanks for your early reply to my letter; and I should have felt doubly thankful if you had found George's letter, and sent it, or a copy. I am, at present, at a standstill; - though not on your account, as your information respecting that letter will merely influence one paragraph; for others are ready. Yet, if you can find, and will send the mass (which you mention) of facts, documents, and writings, I shall esteem it a high favour. My motive for writing Theobald's life is that he may not continue to be represented as he was not; possibly I ought to add another motive, - that of revenge against Pifford and Lockhart, - ay, and Jeffrey. I did intend to sell it, but from what you have said, it is likely I may refuse to touch a penny of its profits, if any there should be. Your letter, relating George's defence, is strange indeed; when I first received it, willing to believe the best, I either did not strictly examine it, or I acquiesced to broad assertions. Now I put it under a <sup>backed by staunch documents,</sup> keen scrutiny, and have no hesitation in declaring that if that is his defence, and if you believe in it, you have been grossly imposed on. You will not allow John (to speak in their Christian names) to have had capacity to judge or know any thing of money affairs; therefore you contend his evidence goes for nothing. I recollect, when balancing an account of my brother James's property, he looked over me, and pointed out an error, of such a nature as required a merchant's eye. When I expressed my surprise at this knowledge of his, he said something to this purpose, - "I detest my own accounts, because they are bad; but I have learnt <sup>accounts</sup> ~~the~~ and, when mine are worth looking into, I shall be a good accountant." The reason for his having signed Abbey's balances wrongly was his entire faith in Abbey's honesty, of which he has often spoken to me, together with his over-simplicity to canvass his small means. He knew enough of accounts to see (what you assure me of) that George was not capable of being a man of business, - which I have under his own hand. However, I shall not have to press John's knowledge on this point much into the service. You say I have not authority for stating that John's generosity to George finished his fortune. No? Have I not John's position and often repeated word to that effect? And have I not their <sup>guardian's</sup> information, both verbally and written? These authorities, with the word, would be deemed sufficient. But, you contend, the one's evidence is unavailing from his ignorance, and



the other's from his character, - though it is difficult to imagine what purpose could be answered by a deception of this nature. In addition to these authorities I have <sup>marked you!</sup> that of George himself, as contained, by powerful implication, in his own defence, as given by you. The defence sets out with declaring that, at the time George first went to America, (June 1813) John was indebted to George, had not one shilling, and received £300 from George. Upon this setting out the greater part of the defence rests. Let us examine it. 1<sup>st</sup> John was indebted to George. In another part of the defence this debt is made out to be more than £100. Did it never strike you how improbable it was that George, considered the most expensive of the brothers, especially in dress, could have maintained his capital entire, lived on the interest, (£50, I believe,) and out of that small sum, and the £100 he says he earned from Abbey, lent more than £100 to John? Without canvassing this improbability, for there is no occasion for it, I compel George to accuse himself of a vile falsehood. Here is a passage from a letter written by him to John, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1818: - "I am about paying your's and Tom's bills, of which I shall keep regular accounts; and, for the sake of justice and a future proper understanding, I intend calculating the probable amount you and I are indebted to you; something of this kind must be done, or, at the end of two or three years, we shall all be at sixes and sevens." This is positive proof. When a man is convicted of falsehood at starting, his defence, by most persons, would be thrown aside; particularly on a point where he could not be mistaken, and they would act rightly, for, it will be seen, <sup>as might be expected</sup> every part of his defence rests on falsehood. 2<sup>nd</sup> John had not one shilling, - that is, in June 1813. Now I have before me Abbey Cook & Co's A.C. Current with John. This is undeniable, indisputable evidence, because they acknowledge themselves debtors to him on 4 June 1813 for £500. Had it been in their favour, you would be at liberty to question it, but not when against themselves. On that day there was due to them from John no more than £31. 9. 2, for tea, chocolate, and cocoa, furnished to him <sup>George and Tom</sup> at various dates, during the previous three years. ~~John~~ George paid all his tradesmen's bills at that time; so did John, as I recollect he told me, - besides, I knew him to be quite free from debts, when he lived with me, up to that period. For this purpose, it seems, John drew out £140, - part of which, possibly, went to pay Tom's bills. There therefore remained belonging to him, clear of all debts, £336. 16. 11, taking into account the balance of interest in his favour of £8. 6. 1. This sum, at the least, was his at that time, instead of not having one shilling! I say at the least, because the round sum of £500 does not look like the last of property; it implies there were yet some gleamings. But enough, - I have proved that George, for a second time, is guilty of falsehood in his defence.

I have done so, merely to draw your attention to the words, and not intended in the original.



3<sup>rd</sup> John received £300 from George before he first went to America. Now I am the principal evidence. Immediately after our leaving George at Manchester, that is, on our first day's walk towards the Lakes, John told me that George had repaid the moneys, furnished to him, when under age with - (I am nearly certain,) - £70 or £80; - but I am certain I am not ten pounds wrong. This John did not believe was sufficient, and regretted that George had not kept, as he had expected, a regular account. John told me further how unwillingly it was for him to be the eldest of two brothers, who could not live on their incomes; and mentioned that he had expended a good deal for Tom in his illness, taking him to Margate, (before we knew them,) and afterwards to Teignmouth; add to which, there was George's and Tom's pleasure jaunt to Paris, the trip to Lyons, and the money lost at the "rouge et noir" table in the Palais Royal, - how much, I forget, but far too much for their circumstances. All this was in confidence, and I have never spoken of it till now that it is become necessary. I was undoubtedly of opinion that George had not fairly repaid him, and I never liked <sup>George</sup> afterwards. For, besides the above, I learnt that George had been extravagant; it was Abbey's alleged plea for dispossessing him from his counting house; and I have a letter from John to Abbey, never sent, (possibly from its being torn,) wherein John hopes that Abbey will consider George cured of his careless and extravagant propensities. Now, it is impossible that John could have related this <sup>on our walk</sup> to me within two or three days after having received £300 from him; and it is equally impossible that I should have dreamed it. We talked over it for miles, and it has never been off my mind. Then again, where were the £300? Not in Abbey's hands, or they would stand in the account; they could not be included in the £500, because no merchant or man of business whatever lumps two sums, received from different sources, in one; the £70 or £80, I think, John told me he had left in the hands of Tom, which is probable. And were the £300 locked up in a box at home? - no, for it appears John continued to draw on Abbey for his expenses. But what ought to set this question to rest is that George had need of all the money he could scrape together for his American scheme, and John had £336 at least, say two years' provision; so there was no immediate necessity for making this handsome present; there would be time enough after George had established himself and was thriving; in the mean while the money was of importance to George, and not to John. The story refutes itself at every turn. For the third time I accuse George of falsehood, and believe that those who read this will agree he is convicted of it. Thus, all his defence, resting on his being John's creditor for more than £400, becomes shamlike; and John, in all likelihood, was <sup>even</sup> at that time, his creditor. I will now examine into a few other bold assertions of his; and you must not be weary of me, but as I am weary of sharing him with falsehood, I now leave that to you.